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STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/STC, OES/SAT, OES/EGC, AND SCA/INS
STATE FOR STAS
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS
HHS PASS TO NIH
STATE PASS TO USAID
STATE FOR SCA, OES (STAS FEDOROFF), OES/PCI STEWART; OES/IHB MURPHY
PASS TO HHS/OGHA (STEIGER/ABDOO/VALDEZ), CDC (BLOUNT/FARRELL),
NIH/FIC (GLASS/MAMPILLY/HANDLEY), FDA (LUMPKIN/WELSCH, GENEVA FOR
HOFMAN)
PASS TO MAS/DAS/JESTRADA
PASS TO MAC/DAS/HVINEYARD

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [KSQA](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [BEXP](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: NEW DELHI BI-WEEKLY ESTH REPORT: AUGUST 2008 THIRD WEEK

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NEW DELHI 00002295 001.2 OF 005

1. (U) SUMMARY: This edition of the New Delhi ESTH biweekly includes an S&T section update on the new Indo-US collaboration in Engineering Education, exploring opportunities for US-India collaboration in space and solar energy, India's plans to set up its largest solar telescope and a report on increase in numbers of international students in India's Universities. The health section includes information about the visit of Health Attach to Pakistan in support of Secretary Michael O. Leavitt's visit and an update on CDC Avian Influenza (AI) Coordinator's visit to Cairo for the Influenza Division's international cooperative agreement meeting. The section also includes updates on preparations for the workshop on Good Clinical Practices (GCP)/ Clinical Research Inspection, polio and the problem of improper biomedical waste disposal in India. Also discussed in the health section is the assessment of National Reference Laboratories (NRL) and the visit by the US Naval Health Research Center delegation from Hawaii for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Department of Defense (DOD) visioning exercise. END SUMMARY

Indo-U.S. Collaboration in Engineering Education Moving Forward

2. (U) Following the visit in June 2007 by the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE) Delegation with the objective of reengaging with India after almost forty five years, it was decided that the most productive approach would be to launch the Faculty Leadership Institute (FLI). This initiative would address the most

challenging problem of engineering education in India - severe shortage of qualified faculty. Funding has been provided by private sector companies, Infosys in India and Jupiter Networks in the U.S. Under this initiative, U.S. faculty from renowned institutions will be training senior Indian faculty (mostly from tier 2 and 3 engineering schools) using latest tools of effective teaching and learning. The Indian faculty in turn will take the lead and conduct similar training workshops for junior faculty in their respective regions and colleges in fundamentals and content. Wide ranging research collaborations are expected to originate from the networks formed between Indian and U.S. faculty.

13. (U) The first FLI workshop was held from 26 May to July 18 at the Infosys Training Center in Mysore. About 30 U.S. faculty and 600 Indian faculty participated over the 6 week period. Indian faculty was mostly from colleges in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Gujarat. SciCouns, who is a member of the Executive Committee of FLI, was an invited speaker at the Leadership Track.

While Preparing for the Moon Mission 'Chandrayaan I', US and India Exploring Future Collaborations

14. (U) As reported earlier, India's unmanned moon mission "Chandrayaan I" planned for launch in mid September has been postponed. The next available launch window is expected to be after October 15, 2008.

15. (U) During a recent visit to Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) in Bangalore, SciCouns met with Mr. Annadurai, Project Director for 'Chandrayaan I' and observed the integration process of the two US instruments on the spacecraft. Discussions were also

NEW DELHI 00002295 002.2 OF 005

held regarding possible collaboration on 'Chandrayaan II'. NASA is considering sending an advanced RTG (Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator) power source (generates power from a 238 Plutonium heat source) aboard 'Chandrayaan II'. This could be mission enabling/enhancing for 'Chandrayaan II'. Because the advanced RTG has moving parts, NASA is seeking a flight opportunity to qualify it prior to its use on long duration outer planetary missions. India has also recently joined eight nations (US, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, France and England) to develop new technologies for exploratory robotic manned missions to the moon.

16. (U) NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Director Dr. Charles Elachi visited ISRO on August 20 with the objective of exploring collaborations on planetary missions. Mission will forward the readout from this meeting.

Exploring Opportunities for US-India Collaboration in the Area of Solar Energy

17. (U) SciOffs had a series of meetings with the officials from Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) including the new Secretary Mr. Deepak Gupta to discuss areas of mutual interest for collaboration. SciOffs also had meetings with Government of India (GOI) labs and private companies including Solar Energy Center (SEC), Gurgaon, National Physical Laboratory (NPL), New Delhi, Moser Baer Photo Voltaics (MBPV), Greater Noida (near New Delhi) and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL), Gurgaon (near New Delhi) working on solar energy based technologies. The GOI is looking for collaborations with the US in both R&D and commercial spheres (see Reftel A). During the course of these meetings it was learned that GOI is still in the process of finalizing the organizing team and venue for the International Renewable Energy conference in 2010 to be held in India, a follow on conference to the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) 2008 (Reftel B).

India Plans To Set Up It's Largest Solar Telescope

18. (U) The Department of Science and Technology is soon expected to approve a proposal for the setting up of India's largest solar telescope. The Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bangalore, the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune, and the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIOS), Nainital, plan to jointly develop this solar telescope. The high resolution two-meter class solar telescope is to be built at a cost of USD 35 million and operational by 2013. It is expected to be located in one of the following three places namely Leh or Hanle in Ladakh region or in Devasthal near Nainital, Uttaranchal.

Indian Universities Gear up for Foreign Students

19. (U) A survey by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) found that Indian universities enrolled over 14,456 international students in the year 2006-2007, a 10 percent increase from the previous year. The top five universities were Indira Gandhi National Open University (3000), University of Pune (2455), Manipal University (1417), University of Delhi (1055) and Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani (912). The added incentive for Indian Universities to admit international students is that they can

NEW DELHI 00002295 003.2 OF 005

charge a higher fee and also the intake could be increased by 15% above the official sanctioned strength. Most of the international students who come to India join undergraduate programs. Manipal University is the preferred destination for many US students for studying medicine. Many private universities seem to be taking initiatives to have collaboration with US universities and offer joint programs so that students could carry out one half the programs in India and the other half in US. This helps reduce cost for the students and at the same time help the Indian university to not only attract international students but also raise its standards through its collaboration with a foreign university.

Secretary Michael O. Leavitt's visit to Pakistan

10. (U) Health Attach Dr. Altaf Lal visited Pakistan from 14-21 August in support of the visit of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretary Michael O. Leavitt's visit to Pakistan.

Influenza Division's International Cooperative Agreement meeting

11. (U) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Avian Influenza (AI) Coordinator Program in India Dr. Renu Lal visited Cairo from 12-16 August 2008. Dr. Renu Lal was in Cairo to attend an Influenza Division's International Cooperative Agreement meeting from Aug 13-15, 2008. A total of 140 participants (cooperative agreement partners and WHO regional staff) representing 25 countries attended a 3 day workshop in Cairo. Dr. A. C. Mishra, Director, National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, Principal Investigator of the HHS/CDC cooperative agreement with ICMR, along with Dr. M. Chadha, NIV, Pune, Dr. Harpreet Kaur, ICMR HQ, and Dr. S. Broor, Prof of Microbiology, AIIMS, New Delhi attended the meeting.

12. (U) The workshop focused on Virologic surveillance for Influenza, laboratory aspects of Influenza surveillance, coordination and cross cutting of surveillance activities across regions including plans to develop guidelines for pandemic influenza surveillance, and regional training and capacity building. Other issues discussed included basics of cooperative agreement management and payment systems which were very useful for partners who have recently been granted cooperative agreements. Overall plans are to develop unified guidelines for surveillance and disease burden studies around the globe so that unified data can be generated. The meeting also opened channel of communications among various participants, and clearly identified certain regional needs. For instance, it was identified that there is need for training in Influenza isolation and characterization techniques. NIV, Pune has plans to conduct a training workshop in November, 2008 for their own network members and also open up participation from other

international sites.

Update on preparations for the US-Indo joint workshop on Good
Clinical Practice (GCP)/Clinical Research Inspection

¶13. (U) As reported in the previous ESTH Report, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) will engage with the Ministry of Health Drug Controller General's (DCGI) Office in a joint basic workshop on Good Clinical Practice (GCP)/Clinical Research Inspection from 2-5 September 2008 in New Delhi. These workshop dates have received approval from Secretary Health Mr. Naresh Dayal. The USFDA delegation of Dr. David Lepay and Dr. Jean Toth-Allen will be expert faculty for the GCP training program for DCGI officials and

NEW DELHI 00002295 004.2 OF 005

nominated State Drug Controllers engaged in Good Clinical Practices. Dr. Beverly Corey, USFDA Senior Science Advisor will also join the delegation. The GCP workshop will include a site visit to an industry. This is first of a three-part series of "train-the-trainer" workshops to develop knowledge and skills in inspecting clinical trial sites, implementing a GCP inspection program and training future GCP/inspectors/staff.

¶14. (U) HHS Office is assigned by CDC to assist the organization of the CDC/IEIP Regional Training-of-Trainer Workshop on Respiratory Infection Control in Healthcare Facilities in Bangkok, Thailand, 1-5 September 2008. HHS/CDC continues to support joint workshops on issues related to AI and Influenza.

¶15. (U) HHS Office supported the Indo-U.S. workshop 'Medical Countermeasures for Radiation Injury: Current and Evolving Technologies.' This Workshop held in New Delhi from 17-20 August 2008 is jointly organized by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and the Indian Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Defense Research and Development Organization, Ministry of Defense, Government of India. First of its kind, this workshop aims to explore mutual research interests related to detection and treatment of injuries associated with intentional or accidental radiation exposure and lead to scientific collaborations in this important focus area. A/DCM George Deikun delivered opening remarks on behalf of the USG at the inaugural session of the Workshop on 17 August 2008.

Polio Update

¶16. (U) As reported in the Indian print media, the resurgence of poliovirus in western Uttar Pradesh has rung alarm bells in the Health Ministry. This was predicted by the India Experts Advisory Group (IEAG) in May this year. The IEAG, which includes representatives from the WHO, UNICEF and HHS/CDC, had warned the Indian Government that cases of P1 poliovirus may occur. It had advised that an intensive program be launched to deal with the situation. "While the end of wild poliovirus is in sight, the IEAG strongly warns against getting complacent. Cases of both Wild Polio Virus Type P1 and P3 may still occur during the high season in 2008 and these cases will require an immediate response," the IEAG had said in May. Uttar Pradesh didn't report any P1 case till June this year and the officials had started concentrating on P3 virus. Since June 2008, five P1 cases have been reported from the area. Health Ministry officials involved in the project have now started epidemiological investigation and genetic sequencing of the virus reported from Badaun, Uttar Pradesh to check if the virus has been reintroduced into western UP from outside or is a continuation of transmission from the last year. As of Tuesday, 19 August the total polio cases stands at 359 (P1=13 and P3=346).

Biomedical Waste Disposal - A Mess in India's Capital New Delhi

¶17. (U) Delhi based NGO 'Vatavaran' led by Dr. Iqbal Malik has

reported on the waste disposal mechanism at several hospitals in the city. The findings indicate that the treatment and disposal of biomedical waste is a cause for concern. According to the report most hospitals are not dealing with their waste according to the set guidelines and a substantial part of the waste such as syringes find their way back into the market sans treatment posing a serious

NEW DELHI 00002295 005.2 OF 005

public health hazard.

¶18. (U) In New Delhi, of the 425,000 syringes discarded daily in its hospitals, only 30-40 percent were incinerated or destroyed. The rest are back in circulation and sold in the city's markets. All India Needle and Syringe Manufacturers Association President Rajiv Nath said "It is clear that there are several loopholes in the system". For gloves, of the 15,640 discarded daily, only 10 percent are autoclaved and then shredded. The remaining 90 percent are washed, repacked and sold to small nursing homes or for household use. The Report also studied the waste disposal system at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The findings are damaging. AIIMS generates 500-600 bags of hospital waste daily. These are color coded, yellow for infectious waste accounting for 100 per day, 200 blue bags for syringes and needles and another 300 black bags for non-infectious waste. The Report has stated that the incinerator area meant for yellow bags maintained the temperature for incineration at 580 degrees Celsius against the mandatory 900 degrees Celsius. At the autoclave, meant for shredding, people were sorting out waste like syringes and gloves. AIIMS Medical Superintendent Dr. D.K. Sharma said "We strictly follow the rules of biomedical waste management. We have three color coded dustbins in the campus for the same. As far as syringes are concerned, they are sterilized in an autoclave, shredded and then the plastic waste sold". (Note: There is an ongoing debate in the Indian Parliament and the Ministry of Health on this issue. End Note.)

HHS/CDC Lab Quality Assessment of HIV National Reference
Laboratories (NRL) - Follow up actions

¶19. (U) The NRL assessment report carried out for 13 HIV testing laboratories in India by CDC, was submitted to the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) on July 30. This report was further shared with Health Secretary Naresh Dayal. He has officially shared the report with all NRLs and called them for a follow-up meeting in early September to draft a plan that will prepare the NRLs to meet the minimum standards (80% score) by the end of this calendar year. CDC will assist NACO and NRLs in this process. This is the first time ever that an external assessment of lab quality has been conducted. The planned meeting of all key lab Directors with NACO presents a unique opportunity for the Mission to highlight USG/MOHFW collaboration on strengthening this essential component of the public health systems in India.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Department of
Defense (DOD) Visioning Exercise

¶20. (U) A five-member team delegation from the Naval Health Research Center, US Pacific Command and Center of Excellence, Hawaii, was in New Delhi August 11-14, 2008 to participate in the visioning and future direction of the PEPFAR DOD program for India with the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS). HHS/CDC and USAID participated in this review and program re-alignment. US DOD engagement with Indian AFMS led to establishment of the first immunodeficiency center for HIV at Army Hospital in New Delhi (US funds and equipment provided by PEPFAR/DOD.) The review team also highlighted two technical areas (Lab strengthening and surveillance/data analysis) for collaboration between CDC and DOD.

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